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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MONTERREY 000459

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TAGS: [KCRM](#) [SNAR](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [MX](#)  
SUBJECT: MEXICAN ARMY PR OFFENSIVE IN NUEVO LEON

REF: A) MONTERREY 453

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CLASSIFIED BY: Bruce Williamson, Principal Officer, Consul  
General Monterrey, State.  
REASON: 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. During recent days, local Mexican army commanders have sought to raise their public profile in Monterrey, in particular making the point that the military supports citizen involvement in the public security process (i.e., channeling tips on organized crime activity to army units and filing denuncias when crimes have been committed). Another of the military's key talking points has been that it respects human rights and that adequate fora for resolving complaints against soldiers already exist under the military justice system. This PR campaign appears designed to remind the Monterrey public of the army's preeminent role locally in the struggle against the cartels. In the wake of the December 4 Mexican Navy anti-drug raids in Juarez, Nuevo Leon (ref A) and San Pedro Mayor Mauricio Fernandez's efforts over the past two months to portray himself as the region's most prominent civilian crime-fighter, army generals likely want to make the point that they remain 'the tip of the spear.' End Summary.

¶2. (C) The week of December 14 has seen a clear uptick in public outreach by local army commanders. Local media outlets ran pieces, apparently based on army PR materials, detailing the military's accomplishments in Nuevo Leon over the past year in terms of fighting organizing crime. Articles noted that in six municipalities in the Monterrey metro region (including the suburbs of San Nicolas, Escobedo, San Pedro, and Apodaca), active or retired army officers had been named the Secretary of Public Security.

¶3. (C) Meanwhile, Four-star General Guillermo Moreno Serrano, Commander of the Army's Fourth Military Region (which includes the states of Nuevo Leon, San Luis Potosi, and Tamaulipas) and his operation planners briefed business audiences regarding the army's achievements and the challenges it faces. Moreno, who noted that SEDENA had approved his powerpoint presentation, made the following points:

--- In addition to enforcement efforts against the cartels, the military actively sought information from citizens that might help in generating additional leads. He provided executives with an e-mail address to which they could send tip information.

--- Crime victims need to file criminal complaints so that the

military and law enforcement authorities could follow-up. While the army did not have primary jurisdiction in kidnapping cases (the crime of most interest to business executives), if presented with reliable information it could help out in terms of executing search warrants.

--- Notwithstanding accusations made by U.S. NGOs, the army respects human rights and has an effective system of military justice in place.

--- The struggle against the cartels will take a long time to win.

14. (C) Comment. Bolstered by strong public support for their efforts, local army commanders, at least for now, are eschewing their traditional low-profile approach. It could be that they want to remind key opinionmakers that notwithstanding the Navy's December 4 detention of Zeta operatives in Juarez, Nuevo Leon and December 16 operation against Arturo Beltran Leyva, the army has registered the overwhelming majority of the accomplishments in the war against the cartels. Alternatively, given its importance in securing the metro area, it could be that the army wishes to project its reach a bit further into traditional decision-making circles. If so, while the insular Monterrey business community might not have responded to such outreach prior to the perceived security crisis, tough times have changed the attitude of the local industrial elite. Finally, it could be that given San Pedro Mayor Mauricio Fernandez's efforts over the past two months to portray himself as the region's most prominent civilian crime-fighter, army generals want to make the point that they remain 'the tip of the spear.' End Comment.

15. (C) As for Fernandez, in the wake of the national publicity he has received following his premature announcement of the death of a local narco capo (and his subsequent detention at the U.S. border), see Monterrey 412 and Monterrey 435, he

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has toned down his rhetoric. On December 10, he met at San Pedro City Hall with Jorge Tello Peon, President Calderon's National Security Advisor, to explain to Tello the elements of his administration's plan to protect the city from organized crime. On December 14, he briefed members of the municipality's citizens advisory community on crime trends and the measures he has undertaken to respond to them.

16. (C) In Fernandez's recent public statements, he has emphasized 'within the box measures' such as the construction of police stations, streamlining emergency numbers, hiring more police officers, establishing a network of secure taxis, ensuring that night-clubs don't tolerate drug sales on their premises, and setting up checkpoints to catch drunk drivers. At the same time, he has evinced strong opposition to the establishment of a 'single command' state police force -- an idea floated by the Nuevo Leon state government -- arguing that this would mean that cities, like San Pedro, would lose their independence. Nevertheless, a prominent a prominent local on-line newsletter continues to attack him, noting the checkered past of Luis Cortes Ochoa, one of his key security advisors. During the 1990s Cortes was dismissed from the state's SWAT unit because of ties to cartel figures.

WILLIAMSON